



Census

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ABS testing topics for the 2026 Census

Media Release

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Source: [2026 Census topic review: Phase two directions](#)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has published outcomes from public consultation on topics for the 2026 Census. Five new topics and changes to 12 existing topics are shortlisted for development and testing.

Georgia Chapman, Director 2026 Census Content said, “The Census provides some of Australia’s most valuable statistics, and it’s important that it reflects our contemporary society and captures emerging data needs.

“The ABS expanded the opportunity for public input to the 2026 Census content with two phases of consultation. Our aim was to give everyone in Australia an opportunity to provide feedback and help the ABS understand impacts of proposed changes.

“We considered over 1,000 pieces of feedback during the consultations, across a diverse range of themes. The changes shortlisted cover a range of topics including increasing our understanding of cultural diversity and LGBTIQ+ populations, to expanding information on work, study and long-term health conditions.

“We have assessed the community benefit of changes against the cost and complexity of collecting the data.”

In mid-2024 the ABS will make a recommendation to Government on topics for the next Census. The changes being tested will not necessarily all be included in the 2026 Census. The final decision on 2026 Census topics will be made by the Government.

This concludes the public consultation phase of the 2026 Census topic review process. The ABS thanks all individuals and organisations who provided feedback, and for Australia’s ongoing support of the Census.

Further information on the topic review process can be found in [2026 Census topic review: Phase two directions \(/statistics/research/2026-census-topic-review-phase-two-directions\)](#).

Table 1: New topics under consideration

Theme	Topic
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity
Location	Main reason for moving in last 12 months
	Gender
Population	Sexual orientation
	Variations of sex characteristics

Table 2: Proposed changes under consideration

Theme	Topic	Proposed change
Cultural diversity	Ancestry	Increase the number of ancestries collected from two to four to better reflect cultural diversity.
	Country of birth of parents	Update the question design to be more inclusive. Remove gendered language.
	Religious affiliation	Update the question design to support more accurate data collection.
Education and training	Attendance at an educational institution	Update response categories to count the number of children who are home schooled.
Health	Long-term health conditions	Update response categories to include 'liver disease' and 'migraine' to collect a wider range of long-term health conditions.
Household and families	Household and family relationships	Update the question design to collect more diverse family structures and update to gender-inclusive language.
	Marital status	Update to collect de facto relationship status in this topic (in addition to the Household and family relationship topic).
	Persons temporarily absent on Census night	Asking questions on new Census topics will be considered once the topics recommended to Government are determined.
Income and work	Industry of employment	Update question wording to improve alignment with the Labour Force Survey.
	Labour force status	Update question wording and response categories to improve alignment with the Labour Force Survey.
Population	Sex	Update question to specifically collect sex recorded at birth and update response categories to improve data quality.
Transport	Mode of travel to work	Update response categories to include more contemporary modes of travel.

Table 3: Status of existing topics being considered for removal

Theme	Topic	Status
Income and work	Income	Under consideration. Assessing replacing the topic with administrative data in Census outputs.
Population	Number of children ever born	Will be recommended to return to a decennial collection with removal for 2026 Census.
Transport	Number of motor vehicles	Under consideration. Investigating impact of removal of topic.
Unpaid work and care	Unpaid work - domestic activities	Under consideration. Investigating impact of removal of topic.

Media notes

- The final direction for these topics will consider consultation feedback and the relative priority of each topic against other content changes being considered for the 2026 Census.
- Further information on proposed changes, including feedback received through the consultation, is available in the [2026 Census topic review: Phase two directions](#) ([/statistics/research/2026-census-topic-review-phase-two-directions](#)) publication.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team via media@abs.gov.au (<mailto:media@abs.gov.au>) (8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri).
- Further information on 2026 Census topic consultation is available on the [ABS website \(/census/2026-census-topic-review\)](#) and on the [Census Media Hub \(/census/census-media-hub/resources/2026-census-topic-consultation-resources\)](#).
- For updates about the process, subscribe at www.subscribe.abs.gov.au/2026Census (<http://www.subscribe.abs.gov.au/2026Census>).